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FYI for

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR OVERSEAS AID

(INCORPORATED IN THE ACT)

ACFOA HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE
124 NAPIER ST. FITZROY 3065
AUSTRALIA TEL. (03) 419 5588

6 August 1987

Dear Friend

Appeal on behalf of Timorese students in Jakarta

As you would know, the four East Timorese students who sought to leave Indonesia for Portugal last year continue to be denied exit visas and are still in Jakarta. They are Antonino Goncalves, Joao Freitas da Camara, Abilio Sereno and Fernando da Silva. I was able to check on their situation during a visit to Jakarta in May.

While their determination to leave is undiminished their immediate concern is an acute shortage of funds to meet living costs.

The lease on their current accommodation expires tomorrow, 7 August. To secure new premises in Jakarta where accommodation is very difficult to obtain, they have to pay rent for 12 months in advance. This involves a down-payment of approximately AUD$2000, a large sum by Jakarta standards.

Hopefully they will be able to stay with friends until this money can be found and premises obtained but the risks this holds for their hosts means it can only be temporary.

The government support they received as university students has been terminated and their notoriety makes it extremely difficult to find employment. As Timorese who are absolutely persona non grata with the authorities they are also isolated from the community making it difficult to find help in that direction.

I am writing now to ask if you and groups with which you are associated might donate some money towards their relief. Of course if you have already done so please ignore this letter. The Australia East Timor Association (AETA) recently forwarded AUD$150 as an emergency donation and I suspect others from the UK, Portugal, may have contributed as well. However more is required.

If you can help please make your donation payable to the ACFOA Human Rights Sub-Committee and mail it urgently to

124 Napier St
Fitzroy Vic 3065
Australia

ACFOA can have the money conveyed immediately to Jakarta by telegraphic transfer.

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Accommodation is about the only security the students have had since two of them were detained last September leading to their decision to seek political asylum with their colleagues at the Dutch Embassy. Life otherwise has been utterly frustrating, depressing and confusing. Someone who saw them recently told me yesterday: 'Their situation is hopeless. They are watched by the secret police, they have no work, no money and nothing to do but worry about their comrades and families in Timor and their own future. It's a wonder they haven't gone crazy under the pressure'.

A number of organisations and individuals are working on their case legally and politically.

Can you help materially.

Warm regards

Pat Walsh.

Pat Walsh

PS. This appeal has been sent to Australian and international support groups and concerned individuals and NGOs.